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IN THE FUTURE.

IF we could transport ourselves in imagination back to the early years of this century, to a period when the lives of people still living were beginning, what a different world we should find! Think of it. The steam-engine then had but entered on its civilising career; no good roads existed even for fast coaches; no Atlantic greyhounds sped through storms and fogs at twenty miles an hour; there were no telegraphs outstripping time, and making the sun a sluggard; no railway trains to rush along by night or day at sixty miles an hour; and no gas to light our streets or homes. And seeing so much has been gained in so short a time, we can scarcely wonder that many thinking men should turn towards the ever-approaching and unknown Future, and attempt to lift the veil which shrouds it from our gaze.

Forty-three years ago an interesting paper appeared in this *Journal*, entitled 'Things in Expectation,' attempting to forestall what might occur during the following twenty years; and, considering their nature, the predictions made were fairly successful. There is now a much wider field for speculation, and the writer proposes to follow his predecessor's example, and try to anticipate some of the discoveries and inventions which are now casting their shadows before them.

To some it appears that we have, in various directions, already nearly reached that boundary beyond which the human intellect cannot pass; while others see in the success which has followed past endeavour, the promise and potency of still greater triumphs. Besides, how many discoveries Nature reveals to us unexpectedly and unsought for! while each one in succession assists in explaining mysteries yet unsolved. For science, like a benignant mother, has no favourites, and offers her rewards to all earnest seekers, the learned and unlearned alike. She has hid away many of her most valuable secrets in the most unlikely and un-

expected places, and they lie all around us awaiting recognition. Especially is it so with chemistry, which has been aptly termed the 'science of the world and the future.' By its transformations we have been enabled to convert some of the most worthless materials into important objects of every-day use. It is continually opening up to us new sources of wealth and convenience of which former ages had no idea. We look forward to a time when the chemist will make a harvest when wanted, instead of waiting a year for Nature's slower operations. Then from the common matter of the universe we shall be able to build up direct the waste that results from all action, motion, and even from life itself. At present, this waste is restored to us by eating beef or mutton. The mutton was the protoplasm or 'physical basis of life' of another animal, a sheep, which received its protoplasm from the vegetable world. But we shall have changed all that, and the task of obtaining the ingredients, the nitrogen and carbon, direct from Nature, and of combining them in their due proportions, will be simple every-day work for the chemist of the future. Then the destruction of our fleet in war-time would not mean the awful miseries of famine that would at present be almost certain to follow the blockade of our ports.

In the long catalogue of problems on which science is now earnestly engaged, one is the discovery of methods for neutralising or for finding the antidote to the bacillus or seed-form of zymotic or infectious diseases, such as cholera, consumption, smallpox, malarial diseases or fevers. But yesterday the exquisite experiments and researches of Pasteur, Tyndall, Koch, Löffler, and others, have partly foreshadowed that long-sought-for prophylactic which is to make the entry of the too oft fatal germs to the human body difficult, or to neutralise them by a simple or easy remedy. We look to science to show us the road to health and long life, by conquering disease. Medicine and

Surgery have been enabled to take a new and grander departure.

So long ago as 1613, the first note of alarm was sounded regarding the exhaustion of our coal supplies. Standish informed our ancestors that with 'no woode for fuel, there would be no kingdom;' and as for coal, it was not to be depended on, and was failing in quality as well as in quantity. Fuller, the witty divine, also joined in the warning; and ever since we seem to have had periodical attacks apprehensive of such a calamity overtaking us. It is more than probable that our future consumption of fuel, instead of increasing, will diminish through superior methods of using it, without considering the probability of our finding substitutes. For the time may come when we shall be able to concentrate and employ the immense currents of thermo-electricity which result from the action of the sun's rays and the rotation of the earth. We seem to be on the verge of being able to produce electricity directly from the burning of coal; and this once accomplished, there will immediately follow the universal adoption of the electric motor as a prime mover. In this direction we have many resources. For instance, our rivers, the winds, and tides, can all be made to contribute to the production of heat and power. Also in many countries there are springs of hot water which have flowed for centuries unchanged in temperature. On the island of Ischia, in the Bay of Naples, on deepening the sources of these springs only a few feet, the water is found to boil; while a little deeper, steam of very high pressure has been obtained. All these sources of power can be converted into stored electrical energy, capable of being conveyed to any place where wanted, and employed to give heat, light, and great power in small space. No; we need not be alarmed at the prospect of the exhaustion of our coal-fields. Science will solve this question, and at the same time purify the atmosphere of our great towns.

The promised applications of electricity are almost innumerable. Nicola de Tesla promises to give us sunshine by night or day; maintaining that terrestrial heat and light are due to electrical vibrations in the millions of miles of ether which separate our earth from the sun, and not derived from a ball of fire, as is generally believed. These vibrations have been produced on a small scale by means of an experimental alternating current dynamo giving twenty thousand vibrations a second, followed by a luminous haze. This points to the possibility of manufacturing sunshine when wanted. Sir W. Preece has made telegraphic communication between the island of Hat Holme and the Welsh coast without wires, by means of the magnetic currents in earth and water. It is not long since only one message could be sent each way over the same wire simultaneously; now, seventy can be sent, thirty-five in each direction, on one wire. Experiments have proved that electric currents give vigour to the growth of most vegetables and plants, and also paralyse the mischievous activity of parasites, animal and vegetable. Here is hope for the agriculturist, and wider opportunities for

the electrical engineer. It is said that the total amount of heat poured by the sun on every acre of the earth's surface annually is equal to seven hundred and fifty thousand horse-power. From this, a heavy crop utilises three thousand two hundred horse-power only; the remainder, so far as vegetation is concerned, is dissipated into space. Here is energy sufficient to supply all the steam-engines in existence. Who can show us how to apply it to useful purpose?

Another novelty of great value is the application of electricity to sanitary improvement; the treatment and purification of sewage by this method is only too costly for use. The sterilisation of disease germs by electricity in the water supply of cities has been experimented on with excellent results; and the difficulty and expense of dealing with such vast volumes of water is a problem which must be attacked very soon.

We are told that in this country we have no climate—'merely samples;' that an English summer consists of three fine days and a thunder-storm; and 'that the only fruit that ripens is a baked apple.' There is some truth in the sarcasm. The thunder-storm is usually followed by a fall of temperature and 'broken weather,' which, lasting from a few days to a month, combined with the absence of sunshine, often thwarts effectually Nature's kind intentions in ripening fruit. So the electrician aims at controlling the weather. Shall we ever be able to make the clouds discharge their moisture during the night, and thus leave clear skies and sunshine for the day? We have nearly always the opposite at present, and so lose the heat by radiation at night which the sun gives us by day. Some attempts at rain-making are said to have been fairly successful. Can we not employ some of the superabundant energy mentioned above in preventing or mitigating the so-called London fog, which, alas! no longer confines itself to London? Professor Lodge has proved that the discharge of electricity into the air of a smoking-room at once clears it of smoke and dust. A flash of lightning—which is simply a huge electric spark—is projected through the moisture-laden clouds, and is followed by a deluge of rain. Thunder, we know, clears the air. A fog is electro-positive, and the electrician will not be allowed to rest until fogs are things of the past.

When a cheap supply of electricity can be obtained, the immense possibilities which will come within the range of practice will soon reveal themselves. The Honourable Robert Boyle, who lived early in the seventeenth century, entitled one of his essays, 'Of Man's Great Ignorance of the Uses of Natural Things, or that there is no one Thing in Nature whereof the Uses to Human life are yet thoroughly understood.' The whole history of science, electricity especially, has been one long commentary on this curious text. After the publication of Franklin's experiments, it was generally believed that there was nothing remaining to be discovered concerning electricity. 'It may be said,' wrote Priestley, not many years later, in reply to this hasty statement, 'there is a *ne plus ultra* in everything, and therefore in

electricity. There is no reason to think that we have arrived at it, for with every new discovery it becomes more apparent that the *ultima Thule* of electrical possibilities lies far beyond our horizon.

It is a striking illustration of the primitive barbarism still inherent in the human race, and of the elementary condition in which we yet live, that civilised nations are willing to sacrifice so much treasure and ingenuity in preparation for war. Even we in this country, whose public burdens in this connection are as nothing compared with those of some of our neighbours, spend one-third of our national income in paying for past wars, one-third in preparation for future wars, leaving the remaining one-third for carrying on the work of the nation. It is, however, a hopeful sign that two of the most civilised nations on this planet have given a noble example in settling international disputes by arbitration. The time will surely come when the youthful manhood of great nations will refuse to be led to mutual slaughter, and to submit to all the evils and demoralisation which inevitably follow in the track of war. And it is to be sincerely hoped that arbitration through the power of an intellectual, cultured, and enlightened public opinion, international and universal in its application, will speedily take the place of war.

A universal language has for nearly three centuries been the dream of scientific men, and some think that the wonderful strength and vitality of our actual English tongue points to its general adoption in the course of time. It is the language which has made the greatest progress in respect of the numbers speaking it within this century. In the year 1800 it was said to be used by twenty-two millions of people, and is now spoken by much more than one hundred millions; while the numbers speaking Russian rose in the same time from thirty to seventy or eighty millions, all the other European languages being left far behind. English is the language of the greatest colonising race in history, the race which still holds the commercial supremacy of the world. It is the language of the great American nation: and from the United Kingdom and the United States, from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Cape, and India, it is pushing its influence farther into every corner of the habitable globe. It is not, then, a perfectly foolish expectation that our language may eventually become the accepted tongue of the civilised world.

By better methods of research, with instruments far superior to anything we as yet possess, and by continued patient investigation, how much may we yet learn! May we not hope to solve problems relating to remote worlds, and possibly to the organic and sentient beings who inhabit them? Knowing what has been accomplished recently by spectrum analysis and the union of the photographic camera with the telescope—making the stars themselves deliver their own messages regarding their movements and composition—it is unreasonable to put any limit to what the future may have in store for us. Besides, we may reasonably assume that the planets are inhabited,

it may be by beings as superior to us intellectually as we are to our ancestors of thousands of years ago; and from them the first communication may come.

Science is only at the beginning of its career. The prospects of the future invite to present humility. We are still, like Newton after all his discoveries, standing on the shore of a great ocean, from which we have picked up a few of its treasures thrown upon the beach, each one of which only serves to show its illimitable and, as yet, undiscovered wealth.

THE CHRONICLES OF COUNT ANTONIO.*

By ANTHONY HOPE, Author of *The Prisoner of Zenda*.

CHAPTER VII. (continued).

THUS had the day worn to evening, and long had the day seemed to Antonio, who sat before the mouth of the cave, with Venusta by his side. All day they had sat thus alone, for Luigi and the two youths had gone to set snares in the wood behind the cave—or such was the pretext Luigi made; and Antonio had let them go, charging them to keep in earshot. As the long day passed, Antonio, seeking to entertain the lady and find amusement for her through the hours, began to recount to her all that he had done, how he had seized the Sacred Bones, the manner of his difference with the Abbot of St Prisian, and much else. But of the killing of Duke Paul he would not speak; nor did he speak of his love for Lucia till Venusta pressed him, making parade of great sympathy for him. But when he had set his tongue to the task, he grew eloquent, his eyes gleamed and his cheek flushed, and he spoke in the low reverent voice that a true lover uses when he speaks of his mistress, as though his wonted accents were too common and mean for her name. And Venusta sat listening, casting now and again a look at him out of her deep eyes, and finding his eyes never on hers, but filled with the fancied vision of Lucia. And at last, growing impatient with him, she broke out petulantly, 'Is this girl, then, different from all others, that you speak of her as though she were a goddess?'

'I would not have spoken of her but that you pressed me,' laughed Antonio. 'Yet in my eyes she is a goddess—as every maid should be to her lover.'

Venusta caught a twig from the ground and broke it sharp across. 'Boys' talk!' said she, and flung the broken twig away.

Antonio laughed gently, and leaned back, resting on the rock. 'Maybe,' said he, 'Yet is there none who talks boys' talk for you?'

'I love men,' said she, 'not boys. And if I were a man, I think I would love a woman, not a goddess.'

'It is Heaven's chance, I doubt not,' said Antonio, laughing again. 'Had you and I

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chanced to love, we should not have quarrelled with the boys' talk nor at the name of goddess.'

She flushed suddenly, and bit her lip, but she answered in railery, 'Indeed, had it been so, a marvel of a lover I should have had! For you have not seen your mistress for many many months, and yet you are faithful to her. Are you not, my lord?'

'Small credit not to wander where you love to rest,' said Antonio.

'And yet youth goes in waiting, and delights missed come not again,' said she, leaning towards him with a light in her eyes, and scanning his fair hair and bronzed cheek, his broad shoulders and the sinewy hands that nursed his knee.

'It may well be that they will not come to me,' he said. 'For the Duke has a halter ready for my throat, if by force or guile he can take me.'

She started at these words, searching his face; but he was calm and innocent of any hidden meaning. She forced a laugh as she said, twisting a curl of her hair round her finger, 'The more reason to waste no time, my lord Antonio.'

Antonio shook his head and said lightly, 'But I think he cannot take me by force, and I know of no man in all the Duchy that would betray me to a shameful death.'

'And of no woman?' she asked, glancing at him from under drooping lashes.

'No, for I have wronged none; and women are not cruel.'

'Yet there may be some, my lord, who call you cruel, and therefore would be cruel in vengeance. A lover faithful as you can have but one friend among women.'

'I know of none such,' he laughed. 'And surely the vengeance would be too great for the offence, if there were such.'

'Nay, I know not that,' said Venusta frowning.

'I would trust myself to any woman, even though the Duke offered her great rewards, ay, as readily as I put faith in Lucia herself, or in you.'

'You couple me with her?'

'In that matter most readily,' said Antonio.

'But in nothing else?' she asked, flushing again in anger, for still his eyes were distant, and he turned them never on her.

'You must pardon me,' he said. 'My eyes are blinded.'

For a moment she sat silent; then she said in a low voice, 'But blind eyes have learned to see before now, my lord.'

Then Antonio turned his eyes on her; and now she could not meet them, but turned her burning face away. For her soul was in tumult, and she knew not now whether she loved or hated him, nor whether she would save or still betray him. And the trust he had in her gnawed her guilty heart. So that a sudden passion seized her, and she caught Antonio by the arm, crying, 'But if a woman held your life in her hand and asked your love as its price, Antonio?'

'Such a thing could not be,' said he, wondering.

'Nay, but it might. And if it were?'

And Antonio, marvelling more and more at her vehemence, answered, 'Love is dear, and honour is dear; but we of Monte Velluto hold life of no great price.'

'Yet it is a fearful and shameful thing to hang from the city wall.'

'There are worse things,' said he. 'But indeed, I count not to do it;' and he laughed again.

Venusta sprang to her feet and paced the space between the cave and the river bank with restless steps. Once she flung her hands above her head and clasped them; then, holding them clasped in front of her, she stood by Antonio and bent over him, till her hair, falling forward as she stooped, brushed his forehead and mingled with his fair locks; and she breathed softly his name, 'Antonio, Antonio!' And he looked up with a great start, stretching up his hand as though to check her; but he said nothing. And she, suddenly sobbing, fell on her knees by him; yet, as suddenly, she ceased to sob, and a smile came on her lips, and she leaned towards him, saying again, 'Antonio.'

'I pray you, I pray you,' said he, seeking to stay her courteously.

Then, careless of her secret, she flashed out in wrath, 'Ah, you scorn me, my lord! You care nothing for me. I am dirt to you. Yet I hold your life in my hand!' And then in an instant she grew again softened, beseeching, 'Am I so hideous, dear lord, that death is better than my love? For if you will love me, I will save you.'

'I know not how my life is in your hands,' said he, glad to catch at that and leave the rest of what Venusta said.

'Is there any path that leads higher up into the mountains?' she asked.

'Yes, there is one,' said he; 'but if need came now, I could not climb it with this wounded foot of mine.'

'Luigi and the young men could carry you?'

'Yes; but what need? Tommasino and the band will return soon.'

But she caught him by the hand, crying, 'Rise, rise; call the men and let them carry you. Come, there is no time for lingering. And if I save you, my lord Antonio?'—And a yearning question sounded in her voice.

'If you save me a thousand times, I can do nothing else than pray you spare me what is more painful than death to me,' said he, looking away from her and being himself in great confusion.

'Come, come,' she cried. 'Call them! Perhaps some day—' Call them, Antonio.'

But as she spoke, before Antonio could call, there came a loud cry from the wood behind the cave—the cry of a man in some great strait. Antonio's hand flew to his sword, and he rose to his feet, and stood leaning on his sword. Then he cried aloud to Luigi. And in a moment Luigi and one of the youths came running; and Luigi, casting one glance at Venusta, said breathlessly, 'My lord, Jacopo's foot slipped, and the poor fellow has fallen down a precipice thirty feet deep on to the rocks below, and we fear that he is sore hurt.'

Venusta sprang a step forward, for she suspected (what the truth was) that Luigi himself had aided the slipping of Jacopo's foot by a sudden lurch against him; but she said nothing, and Antonio bade Luigi go quick and look after Jacopo, and take the other youth with him.

'But we shall leave you unguarded, my lord,' said Luigi with a cunning show of solicitude.

'I am in no present danger, and the youth may be dying. Go speedily,' said Antonio.

Luigi turned, and with the other youth (Tommasino told Niccolo his name, but Niccolo had forgotten it) rushed off; and even as he went, Venusta cried, 'It is a lie! You yourself brought it about!' But Luigi did not hear her, and Antonio, left again alone, asked her, 'What mean you?'

'Nay, I mean naught,' said she, affrighted, and, when faced by his inquiring eyes, not daring to confess her treachery.

'I hope the lad is not killed,' said Antonio.

'I care not for a thousand lads. Think of yourself, my lord!' And, planning to rouse Antonio without betraying herself, she said, 'I distrust this man Luigi. Is he faithful? The Duke can offer great rewards.'

'He has served me well. I have no reason to mistrust him,' said Antonio.

'Ah, you trust every one!' she cried in passion and in scorn of his simplicity. 'You trust Luigi! You trust me!'

'Why not?' said he. 'But indeed now I have no choice. For they cannot carry both Jacopo and me up the path.'

'Jacopo! You would stay for Jacopo?' she flashed out fiercely.

'If nothing else, yet my oath would bind me not to leave him while he lives. For we of the band are all bound to one another as brethren by an oath, and it would look ill, if I, for whom they all have given much, were the first to break the oath. So here I am, and here I must stay,' and Antonio ended smiling, and, his foot hurting him while he stood, sat down again and rested against the rock.

It was now late and evening fell; and Venusta knew that the Duke's men should soon be upon them. And she sat down near Antonio and buried her face in her hands, and she wept. For Antonio had so won upon her by his honour and his gentleness, and most of all by his loyal clinging to the poor boy Jacopo, that she could not think of her treachery without loathing and horror. Yet she dared not tell him—that now seemed worse to her than death. And while they sat thus, Luigi came and told Antonio that the youth was sore hurt, and that they could not lift him.

'Then stay by him,' said Antonio. 'I need nothing.'

And Luigi bowed, and, turning, went back to the other youth, and bade him stay by Jacopo, while he went by Antonio's orders to seek for some one to aid in carrying him. 'I may chance,' said he, 'to find some shepherds.' So he went, not to seek shepherds, but to seek the Duke's men, and tell them that they might safely come upon Antonio, for he had now none to guard him.

Then Antonio said to Venusta, 'Why do you sit and weep?'

For he thought that she wept because he had scorned the love in which her words declared her to hold him, and he was sorry. But she made no answer.

And he went on, 'I pray you do not weep. For do not think I am blind to your beauty or to the sweet kindness which you have bestowed upon me. And in all things that I may, I will truly and faithfully serve you to my death.'

Then she raised her head and she said, 'That will not be long, Antonio.'

'I know not, but for so long as it may be,' said he.

'It will not be long,' she said again, and burst into quick passionate sobs, that shook her and left her at last breathless and exhausted.

Antonio looked at her for a while and said, 'There is something that you do not tell me. Yet, if it be anything that causes you pain or shame, you may tell me as readily as you would any man. For I am not a hard man, and I have many things on my own conscience that forbid me to judge harshly of another.'

She raised her head and she lifted her hand into the air. The stillness of evening had fallen, and a light wind blew up from the plain. There was no sound save from the flowing of the river and the gentle rustle of the trees.

'Hark!' said she. 'Hark! hark!' and with every repetition of the word her voice rose till it ended in a cry of terror.

Antonio set his hand to his ear and listened intently. 'It is the sound of men's feet on the rocky path,' said he, smiling. 'Tommasino returns, and I doubt not that he brings your jewels with him. Will you not give him a smiling welcome? Ay, and to me also your smiles would be welcome. For your weeping pierces my heart, and the dimness of your eyes is like a cloud across the sun.'

Venusta's sobs had ceased, and she looked at Antonio with a face calm, white, and set. 'It is not the lord Tommasino,' she said. 'The men you hear are the Duke's men;' and then and there she told him the whole. Yet she spoke as though neither he nor any other were there, and as though she rehearsed for her own ear some lesson that she had learned; so lifeless and monotonous was her voice as it related the shameful thing. And at last she ended saying, 'Thus in an hour you will be dead, or captured and held for a worse death. It is I who have done it.' And she bent her head again to meet her hands; yet she did not cover her face, but rested her chin on her hands, and her eyes were fixed immovably on Count Antonio.

For the space of a minute or two he sat silent. Then he said, 'I fear, then, that Tommasino and the rest have had a fight against great odds. But they are stout fellows—Tommasino, and old Bena, and the rest. I hope it is well with them.' Then, after a pause, he went on, 'Yes, the sound of the steps comes nearer. They will be here before long now. But I had not thought it of Luigi.'

The rogue! I trust they will not find the two lads.'

Venusta sat silent, waiting for him to reproach her. He read her thought on her face, and he smiled at her, and said to her, 'Go and meet them; or go, if you will, away up the path. For you should not be here when the end comes.'

Then she flung herself at his feet, asking forgiveness, but finding no words for her prayer. 'Ay, ay,' said he gently. 'But of God you must ask it in prayers and good deeds.' And he dragged himself to the cave and set himself with his back against the rock and his face towards the path along which the Duke's men must come. And he called again to Venusta, saying, 'I pray you, do not stay here.' But she heeded him not, but sat again on the ground, her chin resting on her hands and her eyes on his.

'Hark, they are near now!' said he. And he looked round at sky and trees and at the rippling swift river, and at the long dark shadows of the hills; and he listened to the faint sounds of the birds and living creatures in the wood. And a great lust of life came over him, and for a moment his lip quivered and his head fell; he was very loth to die. Yet soon he smiled again and raised his head, and so leaned easily against the rock.

Now the lord Lorenzo and his twenty men, conceiving that the Lieutenant of the Guard could without difficulty hold Tommasino, had come along leisurely, desiring to be in good order and not weary when they met Antonio; for they feared him. And thus it was evening when they came near the cave and halted a moment to make their plans; and here Luigi met them and told them how Antonio was alone and unguarded. But Lorenzo desired, if it were possible, to take Antonio alive and carry him alive to the Duke, knowing that thus he would win His Highness's greatest thanks. And while they talked of how this might best be effected, they in their turn heard the sound of men coming up the road, these sounds being made by Tommasino, Bena, and their party, who had ridden as fast as the weariness of their horses let them. But because they had ridden fast, their horses were foundered, and they had dismounted, and were now coming on foot; and Lorenzo heard them coming just as he also had decided to go forward on foot, and had caused the horses to be led into the wood and tethered there. And he asked, 'Who are these?'

Then one of his men, a skilled woodsman and hunter, listening, answered, 'They are short of a dozen, my lord. They must be come with tidings from the Lieutenant of the Guard. For they would be more if the Lieutenant came himself, or if by chance Tommasino's band had eluded him.'

'Come,' said Lorenzo. 'The capture of the Count must be ours, not theirs. Let us go forward without delay.'

Thus Lorenzo and his men pushed on; and but the half of a mile behind came Tommasino and his; and again three or four miles behind them came the Lieutenant and his; and all these companies were pressing on towards the

cave where Antonio and Venusta were. But Tommasino's men still marched the quicker, and they gained on Lorenzo, while the Lieutenant did not gain on them; yet by reason of the uncensured windings of the way, as it twisted round rocks and skimmed precipices, they did not come in sight of Lorenzo, nor did he see them; indeed he thought now of nothing but of coming first on Antonio, and of securing the glory of taking him before the Lieutenant came up. And Tommasino, drawing near the cave, gave his men orders to walk very silently; for he hoped to surprise Lorenzo unawares. Thus, as the sun sank out of sight, Lorenzo came to the cave and to the open space between it and the river, and beheld Antonio standing with his back against the rock and his drawn sword in his hand, and Venusta crouching on the ground some paces away. When Venusta saw Lorenzo, she gave a sharp, stifled cry, but did not move: Antonio smiled, and drew himself to his full height.

'Your tricks have served you well, my lord,' he said. 'Here I am alone and crippled.'

'Then yield yourself,' said Lorenzo. 'We are twenty to one.'

'I will not yield,' said Antonio. 'I can die here as well as at Firmola, and a thrust is better than a noose.'

Then Lorenzo, being a gentleman of high spirit and courage, waved his men back; and they stood still ten paces off, watching intently, as Lorenzo advanced towards Antonio, for, though Antonio was lame, yet they looked to see fine fighting. And Lorenzo advanced towards Antonio, and said again, 'Yield yourself, my lord.'

'I will not yield,' said Antonio again.

At this instant the woodsman who was with Lorenzo raised his hand to his ear and listened for a moment; but Tommasino came softly, and the woodsman was deceived. 'It is but leaves,' he said, and turned again to watch Lorenzo. And that lord now sprang fiercely on Antonio and the swords crossed. And as they crossed, Venusta crawled on her knees nearer, and, as the swords played, nearer still she came, none noticing her, till at length she was within three yards of Lorenzo. He now was pressing Antonio hard, for the Count was in great pain from his foot, and as often as he was compelled to rest his weight on it, it came near to failing him, nor could he follow up any advantage he might gain against Lorenzo. Thus passed three or four minutes in the encounter. And the woodsman cried, 'Hark! Here comes the Lieutenant. Quick, my lord, or you lose half the glory!' Then Lorenzo sprang afresh on Antonio. Yet as he sprang, another sprang also; and as that other sprang there rose a shout from Lorenzo's men; yet they did not rush to aid in the capture of Antonio, but turned themselves round. For Bena, with Tommasino at his heels, had shot among them like a great stone from a catapult; and this man Bena was a great fighter; and now he was all aflame with love and fear for Count Antonio. And he crashed through their ranks, and split the head of the woodsman with the heavy sword he carried; and thus he came to Lorenzo. But there in amaze-

ment he stood still. For Antonio and Lorenzo had dropped their points and fought no more; but both stood with their eyes on the slim figure of a girl that lay on the ground between them; and blood was pouring from a wound in her breast, and she moaned softly. And while the rest fought fiercely, these three stood looking on the girl; and Lorenzo looked also on his sword, which was dyed three inches up the blade. For as he thrust most fiercely at Antonio, Venusta had sprung at him with the spring of a young tiger, a dagger flashing in her hand, and in the instinct that sudden danger brings, he had turned his blade against her; and the point of it was deep in her breast before he drew it back with horror and a cry of 'Heavens! I have killed her!' And she fell full on the ground at the feet of Count Antonio, who had stood motionless in astonishment, with his sword in rest.

Now the stillness and secrecy of Tommasino's approach had served him well, for he had come upon Lorenzo's men when they had no thought of an enemy, but stood crowded together, shoulder to shoulder; and several of them were slain and more hurt before they could use their swords to any purpose; but Tommasino's men had fallen on them with great fury, and had broken through them even as Bena had, and getting above them, were now, step by step, driving them down the path, and formed a rampart between them and the three who stood by the dying lady. And when Bena perceived this advantage, wasting little thought on Venusta (he was a hard man, this Bena), he cried to Antonio, 'Leave him to me, my lord. We have him sure!' and in an instant he would have sprung at Lorenzo, who, finding himself between two enemies, knew that his state was perilous, but was yet minded to defend himself. But Antonio suddenly cried in a loud voice, 'Stay!' and arrested by his voice, all stood still—Lorenzo where he was, Tommasino and his men at the top of the path, and the Guards just below them. And Antonio, leaning on his sword, stepped a pace forward and said to Lorenzo, 'My lord, the dice have fallen against you. But I would not fight over this lady's body. The truth of all she did I know, yet she has at the last died that I might live. See, my men are between you and your men.'

'It is the hazard of war,' said Lorenzo.

'Ay,' said Bena. 'He had killed you, my lord Antonio, had we not come.'

But Antonio pointed to the body of Venusta. And she, at the instant, moaned again, and turned on her back, and gasped, and died: yet just before she died, her eyes sought Antonio's eyes, and he dropped suddenly on his knees beside her, and took her hand and kissed her brow. And they saw that she smiled in dying.

Then Lorenzo brushed a hand across his eyes and said to Antonio, 'Suffer me to go back with my men, and for a week there shall be a truce between us.'

'Let it be so,' said Antonio.

And Bena smiled, for he knew that the Lieutenant of the Guard must now be near at hand. But this he did not tell Antonio, fearing that Antonio would tell Lorenzo. Then

Lorenzo, with uncovered head, passed through the rank of Tommasino's men; and he took up his dead, and with them went down the path, leaving Venusta where she lay. And when he had gone two miles, he met the Lieutenant and his party, pressing on. Yet when the two companies had joined, they were no more than seventeen whole and sound men, so many of Lorenzo's had Tommasino's party slain or hurt. Therefore Lorenzo in his heart was not much grieved at the truce, for it had been hard with seventeen to force the path to the cave against ten, all unhurt and sound. And, having sorely chidden the Lieutenant of the Guard, he rode back, and rested that night in Venusta's house at Rilano, and the next day rode on to Firmola and told Duke Valentine how the expedition had sped.

Then said Duke Valentine, 'Force I have tried, and guile I have tried, and yet this man is delivered from my hand. Fortune fights for him;' and in chagrin and displeasure he went into his cabinet, and spoke to no man, and showed himself nowhere in the city, for the space of three days. But the townsmen, though they dared make no display, rejoiced that Antonio was safe, and the more because the Duke had laid so cunning and treacherous a snare for him.

Now Antonio, Tommasino, and the rest, when they were left alone, stood round the corpse of Venusta, and Antonio told them briefly all the story of her treachery as she herself had told it to him.

And when he finished the tale, Bena cried, 'She has deserved her death.'

But Tommasino stooped down and composed her limbs and her raiment gently with his hand, and when he rose up his eyes were dim, and he said, 'Yes; but at the last she gave her life for Antonio. And though she deserved death, it grieves me that she is gone to her account thus, without confession, pardon, or the rites of Holy Church.'

Then Antonio said, 'Behold her death is her confession, and the same should be her pardon. And for the rites'—

He bent over her, and he dipped the tip of his finger in the lady's blood that had flowed from her wounded breast; and lightly with his finger-tip he signed the Cross in her own blood on her brow. 'That,' said he, 'shall be her Unction; and I think, Tommasino, it will serve.'

Thus the lady Venusta died, and they carried her body down to Rilano and buried it there. And in after-days a tomb was raised over her, which may still be seen. But Count Antonio, being rejoined by such of his company as had escaped by flight from the pursuit of the Duke's troop, abode still in the hills, and, albeit that his force was less, yet by the dread of his name and of the deeds that he had done, he still defied the power of the Duke, and was not brought to submission.

And whether the poor youth whom Luigi pushed over the precipice lived or died, Niccolo knew not. But Luigi, having entered the service of the Duke, played false to him also, and, being convicted on sure evidence of taking to himself certain moneys that the Duke had

charged him to distribute to the poor, was hanged in the great square a year to the very day after Venusta died; whereat let him grieve who will—I grieve not.

STRAWBERRY CULTURE.

IN writing or thinking of the strawberry, and in eating it, one insensibly recalls what Izaak Walton set down to its credit in his *Complete Angler*, that Dr Boteler said of strawberries, 'Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did.' This is as true in the end of the nineteenth century as when first made. The strawberry has been greatly improved in the long interval, but so have other fruits, and new fruits have been introduced. The strawberry holds the same relative position to other fruits that it did when the dictum was first written, and will perhaps continue to do so till the end of time. No other fruit can be eaten in quantity with the same enjoyment and certainty of the absence of ill results. If no change in the relative position of fruits in popular favour has taken place, there has been a great improvement in the fruits themselves by the introduction of many new varieties. This has been largely the work of the present century, and may be said to date from the introduction of the long famous and not yet forgotten Keen's Seedling. This strawberry on its introduction caused great excitement among members of the gardening community, and an anxious desire on their part to get plants to test its qualities. Other new varieties of strawberries followed, slowly, at first, till in our own time the sorts introduced have been so numerous and have so frequently failed, after fair trial, to maintain their reputation as improvements on older varieties, that in many cases they are received with much distrust.

It is generally felt nowadays that favourable conditions in the matters of situation and soil, climate and cultivation, produce the main differences between different sorts of strawberries, or even between the results attained by persons growing the same variety. In making new plantations of strawberries these points demand the careful attention of the grower. The situation ought to be considered first, if any choice is allowed on this point, as a sunny position for a strawberry break means a deal in the matter of the colour and flavour of the fruit. No position will secure sunshine to the same extent as a steep bank facing the south. On this the sun's rays will fall with most power; and if the same may be said of the rain, it will also pass away more quickly, doing more good than on the level ground. In the matter of soil, a good strong clay is best; but soil must be subordinate to situation. As regards climate, if the grower cannot remove to a place with more favourable climatic conditions, he must trust to good cultivation making up deficiencies, which it will to a very great extent.

To begin with the first stage in strawberry growing. The sunniest spot has been chosen for the plantation of a break with plants of this popular fruit. No preparation for a new plantation will improve upon the old fashion

of making the plantation follow a crop of potatoes. If potatoes have been grown upon the break for a term of years, so much the better. As a matter that may be taken for granted, the ground under potatoes will have been dug and dunged, weeds kept down, and the worst sorts extirpated; for if weeds are left in the ground at the plantation of a strawberry break, the chance of getting rid of them while under strawberries is very small indeed. If the potato crop has been lifted early in autumn, there is no good reason why the putting in of the strawberry plants should not be set about after the potato haulms have been raked together and burnt and all weeds cleared off the ground. No digging is required. After the line is set, the plants should be put into the ground and the roots carefully spread before covering them with soil, which should be firmly pressed with the foot. The interval between the plants should be twenty-four inches, and the same distance ought to separate the rows. If the work is well done, they ought to winter fairly well.

When spring returns, and growth commences among the plants, they should be gone over carefully, firmly pressed into the ground if necessary, and the blanks filled up. When May brings the plants into blossom, the grower will determine whether he shall remove the blossom, to prevent the plants bearing fruit the first year, or whether he shall take all the fruit he can get from the young plants. If he determines on the latter course, he ought, as soon as the strawberry blossom is fully expanded, to take advantage of the first fine sunny forenoon, and go over the break, and water, with a watering-pan having a fine rose, the whole expanded blossom. This gentle artificial shower will fertilise the blossom by washing the pollen of the flowers on to the parts designed by nature to receive it, and make the crop a certainty. If this watering be omitted, the work of fertilisation of the blossom will be effected by bees and insects to a considerable extent, but the crop will not ripen so regularly as when nature is assisted by man, though man's help is not required on occasions when a gentle shower falls from the clouds upon the expanded strawberry blossom.

The fruit should set or the infant strawberry be formed soon after the watering, whether artificial or natural, and its development will be much assisted by another watering of the ground round each strawberry plant, the water having a small quantity of nitrate of soda dissolved in it. The advantage secured by this watering may be greatly increased by a repetition of the same sort in the course of a fortnight. When the fruit begins to ripen, it is an excellent plan to put small stones round each of the strawberry plants, on which the fruit may rest and be kept clean. In this position the fruit will ripen sooner, will take a better colour, and have a superior flavour. In the case of a break planted with 'Noble'—a new early strawberry of great size—the advantages resulting from this treatment have been very great, the improvement in colour and flavour being so decided that twopence and threepence a pound above the ordinary

price have been easily got. This shows that the old proverb, 'The nearer the stone, the sweeter the grass,' might be altered so as to read, 'strawberries' as well as grass.

The ripening of the entire crop of fruit being accelerated by a ring of stones round each plant, labour is saved, as the grower does not require to go so often over the break to pull the crop. The need for some such plan as the stone ring round Noble plants was shown by the fact that the branches of fruit grown by this sort not resting on stones fell to the ground under their own weight, and there every berry on most of the branches was ruined by damp. This danger is escaped by the use of the ring of stones, which, heating readily under the sun's rays, greatly improves the colour, flavour, and firmness of the fruit of Noble, or any other large strawberry.

Regarding the pulling of the ripe fruit, it ought to be observed that when the weather is warm it is a mistake to gather the berries in the early morning, as at this time the persons employed in pulling them cannot avoid brushing off all the dew from the strawberry leaves when turning them over in search of the fruit. This is very hurtful to the plants in the warm days of summer, when the dews are so much needed to keep the plants fresh and green, and thereby to enable them to swell the fruit. Observers have noticed that when the dew has been rubbed off in the early morning the foliage droops, and remains in that condition until the dews of night refresh the thirsty leaves. While the leaves droop, the process of ripening the fruit is at a stand-still until the dews of another evening revive the flagging foliage. The fruit should be pulled late in the evening, and will keep well if stored in a cool place.

In autumn, when the ripening of the crowns of the strawberry plants takes place—upon this depends the crop of the following year—the plants are much helped by a small quantity of bone-meal round each plant. When the process of giving this top-dressing to the break is completed, the next thing is to take the draw-hoe and draw the earth from between the rows so as to cover the bone-meal. At the same time any weeds that have begun to show themselves can be summarily dealt with. With regard to 'runners'—as young plants proceeding from the old plants are termed—the one course of procedure to be followed is to go over the break frequently and cut them off as they make their appearance, until the season for producing runners is past. If young plants are wanted for a new break, it is best to make a small plantation of strawberries of the kind wanted. If a thousand plants are required for a new break, the small plantation to produce these will require to have one hundred plants or so, as each plant should yield a dozen runners, if the plantation is made on a piece of good open ground. Every care should be taken to further the growth, and when the runners appear, a small stone should be laid behind each point, to encourage the formation of roots. By carrying on the work of helping the runners, distributing these equally over the break, and giving occasionally an appli-

cation of weak manure-water, the runners will be enabled to form vigorous crowns. When the number required is reached, further extension should be stopped in the fashion recommended for fruiting plants. When the time for planting the runners has come, the young plants should be lifted with earth adhering to the roots, and put in the ground according to the directions already given. Runners grown in a small special bed will be found to be much superior to those allowed to grow on fruiting plants, and will produce larger and better fruit.

The fruit grown the first summer after planting is of small account in the matter of quantity; but the next summer is almost certain to produce a crop of great size and excellent quality. In the autumn of the second fruiting season, after the weeds which will make their appearance have been hoed, an application of manure—a mixture from the stable and byre will be best—should be made so as to cover the vacant ground between the rows. The winter's snows and rains will wash the soluble portion of this into the soil so as to feed the strawberry plants. What is left above ground will have considerable value, as helping to keep the fruit clean and assisting the plants to withstand the summer's drought.

The quantity of fruit produced the third summer is often very great, but this is attended by a falling off in the size of the individual strawberries. The top-dressing following this crop should again be bone-meal, and if a quantity of soot can be applied before winter sets in, the improvement in the quality of the ripe fruit will well reward the labour expended in its application. As a rule, the fourth continuous crop is the last that is worth taking from a break; but if the soil is heavy and well manured with bone-meal and animal manure, breaks can be kept going till the tenth year from plantation. Such a lengthened period of cropping with strawberries, however, cannot be recommended; six years is enough for a break to be kept going with this fruit, after which the ground should again be put under potatoes. No other crop affords so good opportunities of eradicating weeds; and in the course of four or five years ground so managed should again be fit for a strawberry plantation if required.

New sorts of strawberries are offered for sale year after year. It is perhaps best for the general strawberry-growing community to leave these sorts alone until growers of high reputation have given them a fair trial and published reports of results. It will then be safe to follow the recommendations given, and either plant or not. Of the older kinds, Garibaldi and President are general favourites; but almost every locality has one variety or perhaps two differing from those growing in neighbouring districts which are found to do well. Lately, the good old-fashioned British Queen, which seemed to have been given up by everybody, has been reintroduced by market growers with satisfactory results. Another older sort, but of excellent quality, is Stirling Castle, which seems to succeed best on heavy soil. A list of the varieties most largely grown near London will be found in Mr R. D. Blackmore's article on the Strawberry in Chambers's *Ency-*

elopædia. In making new plantations, however, planters will find that it is best to get their plants from a considerable distance.

Strawberry plantations on a south sloping bank should always be helped in the spring months, up to the time of blossoming, by repeated applications of liquid manure of moderate strength. Strong manure-water would stimulate the plants too much, and might bring them into bloom before spring frosts were past; hence, it is best to dilute it considerably, so that it will only increase the fertility of the ground on the surface at first, and extend its influence downward after each application, but when the fruit has fairly set, it must be discontinued—the soil will be enriched enough to be able to stand the summer droughts. From all breaks thus aided by applications of liquid manure, the fruit will be of a superior quality to that produced on ground top-dressed with solid manure in the winter season only; and, alike in colour, size, and flavour easily surpass strawberries grown without some such application.

THE MYSTERY OF PILGRIM GRAY.

A CHRONICLE OF BOSTON.

By THOMAS ST E. HAKE.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.—A DEAD MAN'S KNOCK.

THE late verger of St Botolph's furnished me with the facts herein recorded. Having dropped into the bar parlour of *Ye Shodfriars' Arms* one winter's evening, and chancing to find him there, and in a mood for chronicling, I had fixed him to redeem a promise made at former meetings. With a pondering look on his wrinkled face, he had lighted his long clay pipe, and had held me well nigh spell-bound for the greater part of an hour. He possessed all the natural gifts of a story-teller; and if I had not let the years roll away, and with them the knack to reproduce the simple and picturesque qualities of his unconscious style, the result would have been, I verily believe, something singularly realistic—something almost unique in literature. But the verger has been dead time out of mind. I cannot turn to him now for inspiration. Under the shadow of the great tower of St Botolph's Church—the tower around which the interest attached to this narrative is mainly centred—there is a gravestone indicating the spot where he lies. It was the sight of this landmark, not long ago, that stirred my memory concerning the 'illusive guests' who played such leading parts in the verger's tale.

During fitful instances of moonlight (the verger began) a solitary wayfarer became evident upon one of the high-roads that intersect Wildmore Fen. He was a well-set man, carrying a bundle in one hand, and in the other a stout stick, with which he was constantly compelled to grope his way. At frequent intervals he stopped and peered about, as though by no means satisfied that he was making tracks in the right direction. He stumbled at last upon a white sign-post which indicated a choice of

high-roads; and yet the man could make nothing of the names written thereon. The traveller sat down in despair, his back against the inscrutable finger-post, and waited, though no one came to deliver him from his dilemma. It might be about nine o'clock; and it had been dark for hours. Presently his eye rested upon what seemed a gleam of light, when he chose the road which branched off towards it. When he had trudged along for a mile or more, he began to gain confidence. The light became perceptibly brighter. But some chance of setting all doubt at rest was given him at last. The sound of a horse's hoofs upon the road along the way he had come caught his ear, and grew each moment more distinct. As soon as the wayfarer could make out the shadowy outlines of a man on horseback, he raised a shout.

'Who goes there?' cried the horseman, drawing in rein.

'A friend! What light is that?' the wayfarer inquired.

'The minster light,' was the reply.

'The lantern in St Botolph's Tower?'

'That's it, my man! The lantern on Boston Stump.' With these words the shadowy horseman touched the flanks of his horse with a shadowy whip and galloped forward into the night.

The wayfarer stood like one transfixed, listening to the clatter until it had died away, and staring at the monastic lighthouse. For many years the huge lantern at the top of St Botolph's Tower had served as a beacon to mariners from the North Sea when entering the perilous channels of the Great Wash; and it had proved a no less welcome luminary to benighted travellers journeying towards the town of Boston from the low-lying fen lands for miles around.

The wayfarer moved onward until he reached a number of houses facing a row of trees, upon the bank of a river. There he stopped. Upon the corner house an oil lamp was attached to the brickwork by an iron bracket. The house was a two-storeyed cottage. Beside the cottage stood a blacksmith's workshop. The doors were closed, but a streak of light struck across the roadway. The wayfarer stopped at the front of the cottage, and was on the point of raising the knocker, made out of an old horseshoe, when voices in the workshop beyond arrested his hand. He stepped towards the window through which the light streamed, and peered cautiously into the smithy. Two figures stood there with the dull red glow of the forge fire full upon them. One was the figure of a man, the other a woman. The man, a good-looking young fellow, in a riding-coat and top-boots, had a genial and sturdy appearance. A black mare stood behind him, fastened by the bridle to a ring in the wall. She was craning her neck to get a side-glance at her master as he worked the bellows. The woman looked about eight-and-twenty, with delicate features, though tall and athletic in form. Her shapely arms were bared to the elbows, and she wore a pair of thick leathern gauntlets. A blacksmith's leathern apron almost hid her serge dress. She held a hammer in her hand; and now, as the young fellow snatched

a red-hot horse-shoe out of the fire with a pair of tongs, the woman began to beat a myriad of sparks out of it. Her companion seized another hammer, and the blows were struck alternately. They talked and laughed as they worked. The stranger watched them with a keen stern face. The light fell upon him through the window; and one of the panes being out, he could overhear nearly all that was spoken. He had the appearance of being about thirty or thirty-two at most. He wore a pilot coat buttoned tightly about his broad shoulders. His eyes flashed with jealous anger, and he frequently tugged fiercely at his dark beard.

When the hammering was done, and the girl had plunged the horse-shoe into the water-tank, the young fellow said: 'By the bye, Zilpah, have you had any news lately of Pilgrim Gray?' He knelt down under the mare as he spoke, and lifted one of her hind-legs.

Zilpah brought a hammer and nails, and knelt at his side. 'Pilgrim Gray? No, Mr Harborn. Why do you ask?'

The stranger leaned eagerly forward with his ear close to the unglazed pane, and seemed almost to stop breathing.

'Why do I ask? Well,' said Harborn with rather a forced laugh, 'an odd fancy has crossed my mind. It will surprise you. Fortune-telling is not exactly in my line; but do you know, Zilpah, I almost think that I could predict yours to-night!'

Zilpah hammered vigorously at the nails.

'Could you?' said she without looking round.

'Yes. The man to whom you engaged yourself three years ago,' said Harborn in an impressive tone—'the man who ran off to the diggings, and deserted the forge, with the quixotic notion of making his golden pile, is coming home.'

The hammer dropped from the girl's hand.

'Coming home?'

'Yes; and this very night too!'

'How can that be? He's dead. At least,' said Zilpah, resuming her hammer, and working with renewed vigour at driving the nails into the mare's hoof—'at least he has given us every reason to think so.'

'Still he is coming home to-night! You may hear at any moment indeed,' Harborn insisted, 'his familiar knock at your front door. At any moment!'

A loud knock at the front door of the cottage—a knock that set the mare jibbing restively, at this very instant resounded through the forge.

Zilpah started up from her kneeling posture. 'It's he!' cried she. 'It's Pilgrim's knock.'

Harborn took the hammer from her hand and hastened to complete the nailing of the shoe. Then he turned to Zilpah, who stood erect and motionless, as though she had lost all volition, and said: 'Are you going to keep him out in the cold?'

She pulled off the apron and flung the gloves upon the floor. 'No; I— Of course not!' said she, turning to leave him.

Harborn held out his hand. 'Good-night!'

'Must you go?'

She gave him a pleading look; and then,

placing her hand for a moment in his, with her eyes cast down, she went quickly into the house.

The way by which she went led up some stone steps into a bright little room, half-parlour, half-kitchen. She closed the forge door behind her, and stood in the middle of this room with her eyes fixed upon the front door. The door was unlocked, and she seemed from her attitude to expect to hear the knock repeated, or even to see the latch raised, and the man whom she believed to be dead—dead many months gone by—step across the threshold. But the latch remained unlifted, and no repetition of the knock reached her ear. Her face flushed, and a frightened look came into her eyes. Then she stole towards the door with her teeth firmly set, her nostrils expanded, and her whole attitude bravely defiant. She was like one who, having been told of a ghost in the haunted room, had nerved herself to confront it.

Zilpah flung the door wide open and looked out. There was no one there. The night had become intensely dark. The girl stood upon the door-step and stared up and down the dimly lighted road. 'Pilgrim!' she cried, in an awe-stricken whisper—'Pilgrim Gray!' No answer came. But she could hear the echoing hoofs of the black mare dying away upon the high-road, and she knew that Robert Harborn was gone. She shut and locked the door with a sense of dread creeping over her. She still believed that the knock had been Pilgrim Gray's. It had been as familiar to her as the sound of her own footfall for many a year.

But why had Harborn left her so abruptly? She was alone in the house. Although by no means a coward, Zilpah felt the loneliness unendurable. Would Pilgrim Gray come back? She ran to the door of the smithy and into the workshop, to ascertain if he had possibly passed in there when Harborn had gone forth. No: the forge was empty, as she could see by the lantern that hung there against the wall. She lifted it from its nail and searched in every corner. Then she took down a cloak from behind the door, extinguished the lantern, and went out. When she had padlocked the forge door and seen that the window was securely fastened, she ran down the road by the river-side. The reflected rays from the minster light glittered upon the stream, and this dim glimmer guided her steps. Presently the sound of a waterfall stole upon her. The tide was running out through the sluice from above stream. There was a great drawbridge just below these gates; and Zilpah, hurrying towards it, crossed the river with the water roaring some feet beneath. When she gained the opposite bank, she turned into a byway where the lamps flickered feebly at long intervals. This byway led direct to St Botolph's Church through the oldest and narrowest streets of Boston.

As Zilpah went along, her extinguished lantern tucked away under her cloak, her eyes were frequently lifted towards the lantern that shone so fiercely high up above St Botolph's Tower; and when she at length reached the churchyard and passed in at a side-gate, there seemed no doubt that the minster light must be in some manner connected with her hastily planned expedition. She went into the church

by a small door which she found unlocked, under a low archway; and when she had closed this door softly behind her, Zilpah found herself in complete darkness. But she discovered matches in the lantern, and soon had the lantern alight. Then she stole softly across the church and entered a dwarfish doorway in the wall. This doorway led up a flight of stone steps into the great tower.

It was a spiral ascent, and so narrow that two people meeting there would have found it difficult to pass. Zilpah went with surprising rapidity up these winding steps, only pausing occasionally at some barred window, where the keen night-wind blew in upon her and helped her to recover breath. The Tower of St Botolph's at Boston is over three hundred feet in height, and in order to reach the summit, one has to mount nearly five hundred steps. It was midnight, and the great bell beat out the hour with its impressive pause between each stroke. Then there stole upon Zilpah's ear the soft tones of a violin, as she reached an archway that led out upon a parapet, where the rays from the lantern brightened the massive stonework of the buttresses, while the background was crowded with black shadows on all sides. This parapet with its four turrets—one at each angle—crowned St Botolph's Tower. The lantern stood above the belfry, a brilliant jewel in the midst. Zilpah mounted the steps that led into one of the turrets. The spiral ascent had now become narrower and almost dark. But she presently came upon a door with a round window in the centre panel, like a porthole in a ship's cabin. The music of the violin sounded from the other side of this door. She crept up noiselessly to the topmost step and looked in at the round window.

The room—for it was an outlook in the turret fitted up as a room—was circular in shape. There was a long narrow window in it, like the window in a prison, and through this window the light from the minster lantern looked in. On an old oaken chest, with his back to the light, sat a big, strong-built man of about sixty. His whole attitude expressed deep abstraction. His head was bent over a violin, which he hugged caressingly under his chin. His legs were crossed, and his back was arched until it resembled the bridge of the instrument upon which he played. He had completely abandoned himself to the melody. His appearance was that of a blacksmith from his singed and grimy cap to his cinder-soiled, hobnail boots. A number of blacksmiths' tools and innumerable bits of old iron and brass—among other things, a bell without its clapper—strewn the floor. Zilpah waited patiently until the music ceased. She then tapped on the window, and tugging at a piece of knotted rope, the door swung open, and she stepped in. 'I'm sorry to be late, father,' said she. 'But one or two things have happened to prevent me from coming sooner. Robert Harborn brought his mare to be shod, and'—

'Young Harborn, the banker?'

'Yes. And—and it has gone twelve.'

'Gone twelve, has it? Well,' said the man, looking down tenderly at his violin, 'I daresay

it has! I don't take no heed o' time when I'm up here among the works. And yet,' he added, touching a violin string with his grimy thumb, 'if anything went contrary among these here bells, Zilpah, I'd be the first to find it out.'

Zilpah's father was known as Michael Garfoot, blacksmith, for miles round Boston. He was noted for his music on the anvil even more than upon the violin. He had a meditative, smoke-dried face, set in a shading of dingy red hair that met in a ragged fringe under his chin.

'Father,' said Zilpah, looking about her and speaking in a flurried tone, 'were you of opinion that Pilgrim Gray was dead?'

'Pilgrim Gray?' and he raised his eyes dreamily to Zilpah's face, as though forcing himself out of an abstraction into which he had fallen. 'Dead? Why, o' course he is!—Dead? Why, didn't that sea-faring chap, what I told you about, confirm the news of Pilgrim's death only t'other day?'

'What sea-faring chap, father?' cried Zilpah, in a tone of angry reproach. 'You never told me a word about it!'

Michael Garfoot put down his violin, then he looked up at Zilpah with an air of perplexity and vexation oddly combined. 'No more I did! I wonder now; how could such a thing have escaped me?'

'Why, I declare,' said Zilpah, gazing at her father as he sat there with his head bent, 'you're getting more absent-minded every day.'

The look on his face became greatly bewildered. 'It was a long yarn, too,' he muttered, 'and there was a sealed letter. The letter was for you.'

'For me?' said Zilpah—'and from Pilgrim?'

'Ay; from Pilgrim Gray right enough,' said the blacksmith, fumbling in his pockets in a helpless sort of way—'from your old lover! Where can I ha' put it?' He stared vacantly into Zilpah's face.

There was a pause.

'Haden't we best go home?' said Zilpah, with a restless movement towards the stairs. 'You've left the letter, maybe, in another coat or in the cupboard in your bedroom. Don't you think so?'

'Ay,' said the blacksmith, 'maybe.' He placed his violin under his arm and began to descend the turret stairs. Zilpah followed with the lantern, throwing the light about Michael Garfoot's head and broad shoulders. Presently the man stopped and looked up blinkingly into the girl's face. 'Don't you be afeard, my dear,' said he confidently. 'It ain't lost.' Then he resumed his descent; and as he wound his way downwards, like a corkscrew, into the darkness, he seemed to be boring into his memory for a clew to the whereabouts of the missing letter.

When they reached home, taking the same direction that Zilpah had taken when going to St Botolph's Tower, Michael Garfoot sat down broodingly beside the kitchen fire.

Zilpah dreaded to interrupt his thoughts. She went quietly to work to prepare the supper, while her father sat there puzzling his brains, as she believed, over this sealed communication that had been placed in his hands.

When supper was over and the supper things

cleared away, Zilpah saw her father again seat himself by the fireside. He appeared to be in a more absent-minded mood than she had ever known him. And presently he began to put new catgut upon his violin, occasionally employing a pitch-pipe, which he held between his teeth to tune his instrument. Then he adjusted the violin under his chin, and began to play with an absorbed and far-off look.

'Father,' Zilpah interposed, 'tantalised beyond endurance, 'have you forgotten what you promised me? What news did you gain, when that letter was given you, about Pilgrim Gray?'

Michael Garfoot slowly put his fiddle aside and dropped the pitch-pipe into his waistcoat pocket. 'Stop a bit,' said he. 'Yes, yes. It was at the *Shodfriars*—that's where it was—a night or two ago. Dear me! I can't think how it was I didn't tell you all about it. I can't think how it was.' He shook his head reproachfully at this oversight on his own part, and then resumed. 'Well, a night or two ago, as I'm a-saying, I was having a glass with the verger at the *Shodfriars*, when a sea-faring chap taps me on the shoulder. "Blacksmith," says he, quite familiar-like, "I've been given to understand as how your name's Michael Garfoot." "Captain," says I, "you've been given to understand correctly!—What's in the wind?" That was how it began.' Michael Garfoot paused and gave the fire a stir meditatively. 'The chap was a bit shy at first—seemed indisposed-like,' said the blacksmith, 'to state his business with me. But when we'd had a glass together, him and me—the verger joining us as answering for my identity—he explained his business readily enough. Captain Grimshaw—John Grimshaw, mariner, as he called himself—had met with shipwreck and privation. Disasters by sea and by land, as he put it, had hindered him keeping of a solemn promise given to a shipmate o' the name of Pilgrim Gray, a year gone by.'

'What promise?' said Zilpah eagerly.

'A promise,' the blacksmith went on, 'to take ship to Boston, and seek out Michael Garfoot, blacksmith, and deliver into his very own hands a sealed letter addressed to Zilpah Garfoot, the aforesaid blacksmith's daughter.'

'There was a letter, then—a letter for me! Yes; go on.'

'A letter,' said Garfoot, the perplexed look again clouding his face—'a letter which I've put by so carefully, my dear, that I can't for the life of me remember into what secret nook or corner o' the premises I can ha' stowed it away.' His small, dreamy eyes wandered from one side of the room to the other, and he again began to plunge his hands into his pockets and then to scratch his head distractedly.

'Did this mariner, Grimshaw,' said Zilpah, 'positively confirm the report, father—the report that Pilgrim Gray was dead?'

'Ay. He told me most solemnly,' said the blacksmith, 'that Pilgrim Gray was lying at the point of death when that letter was written to you. But that ain't all.' Michael Garfoot's look had become intensely distressful, and his voice trembled.

'Not all?'

'No. That letter contained a tidy sum o'

money. How much did John Grimshaw, mariner, make out the sum to be? Let me think now! Was it seven thousand or was it ten thousand pounds? It was a tidy sum.'

'Ten thousand pounds?'

'Left to you, Zilpah—that was how the mariner put it—as Pilgrim Gray's last dying will and testament.'

'Ten thousand pounds?'

'Seven or ten,' said Garfoot, 'made by trading in pearls and such-like among the Pacific islands. And then,' he added—'and then he went and caught the fever, and died.'

There was a long pause. Zilpah sat there beside the hearth, staring fixedly into the fire. Suddenly she looked up. 'Where is this mariner—John Grimshaw—who delivered this letter for me into your safe keeping?'

'Sailed for Amsterdam,' said the blacksmith, 'that very same night.'

Zilpah rose and lit the lantern. 'Father,' said she, 'that letter must be found. The money is not mine.'

'No?'

'The letter must be found to-night,' said she in a determined voice. 'Do you understand me? Pilgrim Gray is coming home!'

THE NEW DEPARTURE IN THE HONEST ART OF ANGLING.

THE honest art of Angling, as the sweet-tempered Walton worded it, has made a wonderful departure of late years. Although Dame Juliana Berners touched upon the subject in her *Treatyse of Fysshynge with an Angle*, in 1491, and, many centuries before that, Queen Cleopatra went fishing with Mark Antony, and played him the oft-repeated trick of fastening a salted fish to his hook—if Plutarch was correctly informed—we know the honest art was not a fashionable pursuit for ladies till the Prince of Wales brought home his fair Princess from over the sea. There is no hint in Walton's beautiful pastoral that any woman who was not a milkmaid, or 'mine hostess,' was to be found near the banks of streams in his day. There were no Piscatresses standing knee-deep in cowslips, wielding the rod, facing the sun, and avoiding the 'snow-broth' that was the residue of old storms, and other snares. But now fly-fishing has been taken up enthusiastically by ladies, and, perhaps to some extent in consequence, quite a revolution has taken place in the manufacture of the necessary paraphernalia.

We frequently meet with mention of the new light fishing-rods now in vogue. These allusions, both overt and covert, are generally found in accounts of grand harvests in rivers, or in narratives of pleasant sojourns on the banks of salmon-haunted streams. The matter of lightness is one of the requirements that the recent widening of the circle of anglers has helped to make specially desirable. Time was when weight in a fishing-rod was not much of an offence; but that was when only the stronger sex practised the gentle art. As soon as it was ascertained that the adoption of a light material for rods by no means involved a loss

of strength, attention was turned to the subject, and considerable improvements perfected. Whether fishing in rivers that are known as blue, like the Tweed and Earn; or red, like the Usk and Dee; or gray, like the Lochy and Wye; or yellow, like the Spey and Don, the absence of a burden of weight is a matter of moment. We feel sure a few particulars concerning the recent improvements made in the manufacture of rods, towards the attainment of this end, will be read with interest by all who have whipped our wandering streams.

In the main street of a Border town, just before you come to the great stone gateway, all that is left of the high and wide stone wall that once enringed it, stands a lofty block of new buildings, in which is carried on the manufacture in question. In this factory, which has somewhat of a Continental aspect, are gathered together the products of many lands more remote than far Cathay. Plantations in India send bamboos, male and female, in thousands and thousands; islands in glittering seas send their strange bright birds, or rather their feathers, to furnish the flies that form such an important item in angling transactions; and distant mines and other places send many additional items as far-sought. There are three storeys to the factory, in each of which is carried on the different branches of the intricate processes required in the production of the various requisites for fishing.

A novice might think that a bamboo cane would make a fishing-rod with very little manipulation, but it is not so. Every length of every rod made at these headquarters of the art is composed of six strips of bamboo. Each of these six strips has been cut into a wedge-shaped piece, in which process every flaw or weak place has been discovered, and the strip containing it discarded; and when selected, and tested, and seasoned, the six long wedge-shaped strips are cemented together into a mass that is immeasurably stronger than the stoutest bamboo could be. Only about thirty per cent. of the bamboos that arrive are found sufficiently sound for use, and only a very small length of each cane that is sound is used; consequently, a large number are required to make a rod. Arrived at the first joint, a new department comes to the front; this is the manufacture of the brass joint, upon which so much depends in the way of power of resistance and general lightness combined with strength. A lockfast joint has been invented in this factory in which the utmost security is attained, as it is so contrived as to lock as well as join; at the same time it is so treated as to divest it of unnecessary weight by the scrupulous removal, in vandyked cuts, of every atom of superfluous metal not requisite for its purpose. The upper lengths of the rod are made in a similar manner to the lower one just described, and the upper joints, in diminishing sizes, with the same precision and care. The most costly rods have steel centres in addition to the inner cane centre with which the rest are furnished. They are all so pliable that, after being curved almost into a circle, on being released they rebound into their arrowy straightness in a second. All the same, in all the processes, the tying, hand-

ling, jointing, varnishing, and finishing, special care is taken to keep the rods straight, whether bound and tied down or hung up in racks to dry. As we glance around, a steam-engine of eight-horse power, with revolving wheels and wide leathern bands, is turning innumerable machines in the various departments, and filling the air with its din and uproar; skilled workmen step to and fro at benches furnished with vices and tools; rows of rods in various stages are suspended in all directions; varnish, glue, nails, screws, knives, long narrow boxes for the transit of rods, shavings of bamboos and bags of metal filings, meet the eye on all sides.

Passing a counting-house where several lady-clerks are at work, we come to the department reserved for the manufacture of the necessary reels, lines, hooks, floats, and other items of equipment, where scores of minute technical particulars may be noted. It is on the topmost floor, however, that the more interesting manufacture of flies is carried on. In Izaak Walton's time there were but twelve kinds in use. He enumerates two varieties of the dun-fly, one made with the feathers of partridges and the other with those of the black drake; the stone fly; the ruddy fly, made from the feathers of a red capon; the yellow or greenish fly; the black fly; the sad yellow fly; the Moorish fly; the tawny fly, made of the mottled feathers of the wild drake; the shell fly, made of the wings of the buzzard; and the dark drake fly, made of the black drake's feathers. 'Ephemera,' who was the leading authority in these matters about forty years ago, and edited Walton's book with many notes, mentions the wings of starlings, larks, landrails, wrens, golden plovers, peewits, and the black ostrich, as those in use, in combination with the furs of seals, bears, monkeys, spaniels, cats, moles, water-rats, hares' polls and ears, gold and silver twist, and silk and wax. The materials now employed to make the nearest approach that can be devised to the various natural flies most approved by salmon and trout are more varied still. There are nearly four hundred varieties of flies now catalogued, some of which are known by such comical names as Hardy's Favourite, Dusty Miller, Black Doctor, Thunder and Lightning, Candlestick-maker, Greenwell's Glory, Highlander, Garibaldi, Green King, and Welshman's Fairy. A row of young women sit facing a long table, before large windows that overlook the adjacent country and distant hills, all engaged in the delicate work of manufacturing feathers and fur, tinsel and twist, into the semblance of flies. Not only do they deal with the plumage of macaws, kingfishers, red ibis, jungle cocks, blue chatters, peacocks, swans, owls, and herons; but that of the more homely birds, woodcocks, greendrakes, teals, snipes, blackbirds, thrushes, waterhens, grouse, and partridge is also necessary for the perfection of their art. There are few salmon flies that are not indebted to the golden pheasant for their attractiveness. The white tips of turkeys are also brought into requisition. Festoons of spiders that are scarcely more than films or gossamers for fragility are fastened in various places to dry; and gorgeous flies, as well as those of more sombre tints, are

in course of formation as we look on. It seems to us there are but a few touches, a few turns and twists, a little deliberate choice of materials and handling of tweezers, scissors, and silk, a little delicate dexterity, and a fly, with a hook half concealed in it, stands confessed. A carved oak cabinet, however, contains a further triumph in the shape of artificial minnows as silvery as those in our shallow pebble-paved waters, in each of which is hidden the fatal hook likewise. Looking at these subtleties, it is difficult to retain the old conviction that there are as good fish in the sea as ever were caught. It seems to us that so many odds against the inhabitants of the waters must result in a considerable diminution of their number, if not in their quality. That there is a singular decrease in the amount of fish in some of our rivers is certain, when we call to mind the clauses inserted in the indentures of apprentices in Newcastle-on-Tyne, that they should not be fed on salmon more frequently than a stated number of times in a week, and contrast this record of superabundance with the recent news to the effect that, owing to extra scarcity last season, the few fish caught by some anglers have cost them nearly a hundred pounds a piece. It is to be hoped, in the interest of the new departure, that these matters will readjust themselves in the course of time.

MY QUEER FRIEND:

HOW I FOUND AND HOW I LOST HIM.

THE good ship *s.s. Arracan* was ploughing the Bay of Bengal on a voyage between Akyab and Penang. It was an ideal afternoon at sea; even the most timid land-lubber would have gloried in it. There was just enough of wind to make a healthy breezy ripple about the bows, and occasionally to give us a gentle roll sufficient to make us aware that we were on board ship, and not citizens of some floating town moored on a lake. I had just left my cabin, and was strolling towards the fore-castle in that particularly agreeable frame of mind which follows a decent dinner, a good smoke, and an afternoon nap on the quiet. My attention was suddenly arrested by some object floating heavily through the air towards the ship. In another instant it had alighted, and was swaying to and fro from one of the fore-chains. With the utmost caution I approached, and began to scrutinise this new and unlooked-for passenger. After a cautious but careful survey I identified him as the *Pteropus rubricollis*, or Flying Fox—which is really one of the larger bats. Poor fellow!—what an experience he must have had. We were now well out at sea, and he must have winged his way for many a weary mile, vainly seeking for—well, not rest for the sole of his foot—but some kind of bearing or another upon which to hang himself up. And there he was at last swinging by his hook-like claws to the chains, and fast asleep.

I am naturally fond of all sorts of animals, and in his present condition my queer friend to be at once reached my heart. My plan of campaign was speedily formed. Proceeding to the storeroom, I soon improvised a suitable

cage in the shape of a deep wicker basket used to hold potatoes or fruit; and with this and a deck-chair, I drew near to my victim. Mounting the chair, I perceived that he was in the most profound repose, having apparently been at the very point of complete exhaustion when he reached his present perch. I carefully placed the basket beneath him, and gradually elevated it, till he at last hung in the very centre of it, his forearms and claws alone being above the rim.

'Now for you, my boy,' said I, nimbly unhooking both claws from the chain, and thus permitting my friend to drop at once to the bottom. At the same moment, with my other hand I crushed in the top of the basket all round, forming a ready-made but quite effective cage. I could now breathe freely, and take in the situation. Whatever I thought of it, certainly he did not at all relish it. If he was motionless before, he had assuredly plenty of life about him now. He grinned his teeth at me horribly, and spat and barked like a furious dog. It is a pity that some creatures don't know their best friends. Unmoved, however, by his ingratitude, I carried him triumphantly to my cabin, and set him on a little table in the corner, where we could see and converse with each other. But war *à outrance* was evidently his motto, for, approach him as I would, I received the most unfriendly of receptions, with the usual accompaniments of teeth-showing and yelping.

'Well, well,' said I; 'time will try;' and I resolved to leave him for a while to his own colloquies. Next day his behaviour continued much the same. Having heard of the power of a roasted potato or a piece of bread upon a hungry city Arab, I tried now to kill him with kindness. I offered him a ripe banana, but he would have nothing to do with it or me. On the morning of the third day I saw he was beginning to lie low. Hunger, which has conquered many an impregnable city, was beginning at last to tell upon him. In the end he snapped the banana out of my fingers and retreated to the farther side of his cage, behaving much as a cat does with a captured mouse in the presence of the housemaid. All the same, he seemed to relish it mightily, and at the close I fancied I saw in his eyes the remotest glance of affection for the donor. Day by day I continued to bestow on him his coveted bananas, and by-and-by not only found him waiting for his daily bread; he now received it with increasing grace, and ate it with comfort under my very nose. And thus the time flew swiftly and merrily past.

I thought the time had now arrived to bestow upon him a large measure of freedom and self-government, so I opened the top of his cage and gave him the run of my whole cabin, strictly charging my boy to see that the door was never left standing open in the meantime. Our mutual good offices soon ripened into a close friendship. My queer friend would now leap up into my lap, rub his nose against my hand, and look up wistfully into my face as much as to say: 'Dear master, where is my banana?' I used afterwards to tease him a great deal by passing the fruit from one

hand to another behind my back after the manner of 'Hide the slipper;' but he always fetched it in the end. I would also change it adroitly from pocket to pocket while he played the rôle of the very smartest of pickpockets.

But the scene that lingers longest in my mind in connection with him, and the thought of which yet causes a twitching about my mouth, a roughness in my throat, and a certain dimness about my eyes, is yet to tell. It was my invariable custom when out at sea, unless in case of peril or emergency, to have a short siesta in my cabin just after dinner-time. Stretched full length on my sofa, I would turn on my back, close my eyes, breathe heavily, and pretend to be fast asleep. He would then creep up upon my chest, press his little sharp snout close to the front of my neck, spread out his great furry leathern wings quite over my right and left breasts, close his bright mischievous eyes, and purr away pleasingly with a sound which was a capital imitation of my own breathing. What a sense of sympathy, affection, security, and quiet dreaminess and comfort were blended together in these afternoon naps! What a contrast to the barking, snapping, grinning savage of a few weeks ago: it was like some metamorphosis of Ovid. I need hardly say that my queer friend had now the full liberty of the whole ship, from stem to stern, and that he speedily became the friend of all on board, and of myself in particular.

With the combined agility of the squirrel and the cunning of the fox, he used to swing and flap about the decks, making such odd and funny grimaces, and playing such sly, under-hand tricks. Sometimes I would pretend not to notice him, or would seem offended with him, and pass by on the other side without speaking. I had not, however, proceeded many steps till a whiz through the air, and a smart slap between the shoulders, told me that my companion would not be put off thus, and would take no denial; till, after grubbing in every one of my pockets, he at length secured the much-coveted banana, and then retired to eat it by himself, and dizzily, dizzily to swing and drowse from one of the fore-chains.

But the greatest of all the delights of his little circumscribed life was to get a combing from me. I had beside me an old curry-comb, which had found its way on board nobody knows how. On a fine afternoon I used to take him on my knee and put the teeth through his brown furry coat, gently drawing it from head to tail. How he did enjoy that operation! No foud mother or old grandmother ever enjoyed the hair-comb, passing through her raven or snowy locks by the hands of a little child, more than did my queer friend his combing. He would stretch himself out full length, almost serpent-like, and writhe and wriggle with exquisite pleasure under it; at the same time singing away like a pussy cat when her fur has been stroked in the right direction. He used to beg for this luxury in every conceivable way; in fact, he did all but speak.

But now comes the comedy of this brief narration, for my story is a comedy after all, and not a tragedy. We had just got up the

river, and cast anchor in mid-stream, waiting for our turn of the wharf. In the great shady trees by the river's side there were many of his clan, leaping and chattering about. In the dusk, I saw him eyeing them; in the morning, he was gone. Doubtless, some fair Helen or subtle Delilah up among the branches had lured him away; for I saw his face no more. Who can blame him?

A BACHELOR OF FORTY-FIVE.

At Forty-five! Ah, can it be
The rapid steeds have reached this stage,
That Time has meted out to me
The years of man's maturer age;
And I can call mine own at this
No better half, no family hive,
But live in so-called single bliss,
A bachelor of forty-five?

I fain would take the ladies' way,
And, as to age, deny the fact;
But 'tis an awkward game to play,
These registrars are so exact.
No! I'll admit it, like a man,
Nor foolishly with figures strive,
But face the truth, e'en as I can,
A bachelor of forty-five.

I never meant it should be so;
And how the matter happened thus,
Indeed, I really do not know,
Nor how the subject to discuss.
I always loved the ladies, but—
'Tis wondrous how these 'buts' contrive
To keep a man from wedlock shut,
A bachelor of forty-five.

When five-and-twenty was my date,
Had any dismal seer foretold
That this would be my hap and fate,
I should have held him false as bold;
More likely were it had he said
That now I should not be alive,
Than that I should be still unwed,
A bachelor of forty-five.

Ah yes! When beams youth's radiant sun,
When faith is strong, and hope is high,
Man weens not how his path may run,
Nor how the promised land may lie;
He weens not to what unthought goal
Resistless fate his life may drive,
And make him—poor unmated soul!—
A bachelor of forty-five.

But cheerful hope is with me still—
Hard were my case if hope had fled;
Good fishes yet the waters fill,
And there are damsels still unwed;
And in some matrimonial sea
Perchance I yet may daring dive,
And be no more, though still I be,
A bachelor of forty-five.

WOODBURN.

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